

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR GLORIA MOLINA

October 11, 2011

Over the past the two years, Los Angeles County has made progress reforming the Probation Department's Return-to-Work program with the goal of ensuring that disabled employees receive all benefits to which they are entitled while simultaneously reducing the amount of time injured employees remain out on leave. Since Los Angeles County is self-insured, every dollar we pay in disability benefits comes from taxpayer coffers -- and could have been used to fund direly needed public services.

In the case of the Probation Department -- which employs a significantly high number of sworn staff to ensure the safety of youth in our care -- our duty to protect the public purse is all the more acute since these vacancies must be filled by other sworn personnel. The Probation Department placed 270 sworn personnel who formerly were on disability at work with accommodations for their respective injuries. But 379 Probation Department employees are still out on medical leave—and, of them, 340 employees—90 percent—are sworn personnel. This has impacted our ability to optimally manage our juvenile halls and camps.

MOTION

Molina _____

Ridley-Thomas _____

Yaroslavsky _____

Knabe _____

Antonovich _____

To-date, the Probation Department's Return-to-Work unit has focused primarily on maintaining current caseloads. But more must be done. Preventive measures should be taken to reduce the amount of employees suffering from on-the-job injuries in the first place. Probation will not be the first Los Angeles County department to undertake this task; the Sheriff's Department -- which also has a large number of sworn personnel—already has a successful Return-to-Work model in place.

The Chief Executive Office has identified funding to enhance the Probation Department's Return-to-Work unit and will be making funding recommendations in the near future. But before this Board of Supervisors is asked to approve these recommendations, we must be provided with an implementation plan clearly specifying the outcomes we expect to be achieved; how the CEO and Probation Department will meet these goals; and how they will implement the Sheriff's Department's best practices.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the CEO and Probation Department work with the Sheriff's Department to develop a Return-to-Work implementation plan and report back to the Board of Supervisors at least one week prior to the CEO's budget request.

VS/RM/sf